



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago BULLETIN



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Address:

1151 W Leland Ave.
Chicago, IL
60640-5043

Telephone:

773-334-4661

Online:

BuddhistTemple
Chicago.org

Resident Minister

Rev. Patti Nakai

President

Bill Bohlman

Life is Hard, Living is Ease

... Let us taste deeply
The struggle and sorrow of circumstance
With confidence that soon it will all come clear;
And staring at it with no hesitation or holding back
We must go onward on the way of the Wish ...

-- from "In Praise of the Original Vow," *Shout of Buddha: Writings of Haya Akegarasu* translated by Gyoko Saito and Joan Sweany

In the lives of nembutsu followers, whether they are famed teachers such as Akegarasu (1877-1954) or the thousands of non-elite people in Japan, North and South America, I see a common thread. There would be a crisis in their life that brought them to encounter the teachings of Shinran, yet after they found themselves on the path to awakening, they didn't live "happily ever after" in the worldly sense. Instead their lives were filled with more struggle and tragedies, but through it all they demonstrated a joyful engagement with everyone around them.

Akegarasu saw this in the life of his teacher Kiyozawa Manshi (1863-1903). After painful struggles brought Kiyozawa to deeply

Lay Leaders

One of the most significant changes at BTC during the last year has been the increased participation of lay leaders in the Sunday service. Ever since Rev. Saito arrived to work alongside Rev. Kubose, BTC has always had at least two ministers. For a period of time, after Rev. Patti returned in 1995, we had four ministers. To put this in perspective, most Jodo Shinshu temples in America are lucky to have even one minister, with many having to share a minister. Even after his retirement, Rev. Ashikaga was available to officiate Sunday service in Rev. Patti's absence. Now, with his return to Japan, Rev. Patti is the sole minister. This situation heightens the need for lay leader participation.

Currently there are about a dozen lay leaders. These are temple members who have received Ti-Sarana, attend study classes and chanting practice. Some have attended the Dharma Seeds program in Los Angeles to learn the forms and practices associated with the various services. On most Sundays, Rev. Patti is seated on the naijin with lay leaders seated in the front row. Depending on the service, and how many lay leaders are present, various parts of the service that have traditionally been performed by the minister are now done by the lay leaders. For sutra chanting, a lay leader starts the chanting and sets the pace of the



Rev. Patti Nakai
Resident Minister

For more writings by Rev. Nakai, visit her blog, *Taste of Chicago Buddhism*, at: tinyurl.com/chibud

This article continues on page 7 at column 1.



Bill Bohlman
BTC President

Contact Bill at budtempchi@aol.com or find him most Sundays after service at the information desk & bookstore.

This article continues on page 7 at column 2.

September 2017 Temple Events & Activities Guide

- See Calendar on page 8 for specific dates.
- Up-to-date details and last-minute changes are available on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/budtempchi
- All events are free, held at the Temple (unless otherwise noted), and open to the public.

➤➤➤ Special Services & Events ◀◀◀

O-Higan Service—Sunday, Sept. 17, 11 am.

Regular Temple Services

Religious Service—Sundays, 11 am

Lay Speaker Service—3rd Sunday of month, 11 am.

Temple Meetings & Community Service

Asoka Society—3rd Sunday of the month, 1 pm. This month: Sept. 16.

BTC Bulletin Mailing—2nd to last Friday of every month, 10 am. This month: Sept. 22. Volunteers welcome.

Submissions—Deadline for articles and notices: every month, 6 pm, the Thursday 15 days prior to mailing. This month: Sept. 7.

Temple Board Meeting—Once a month, Sunday, 12:30 pm. This month: Sept. 24.

Upaya Helpers (refreshment service, community outreach, ping pong, etc.)—Call Candy Minx 312-618-0880 for info.

Cook It Forward (feeding unhoused persons)—Contact <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CookItForward/>.

Meditation & Buddhist Education

Meditation—*Thursdays*, 7 pm; *Sundays*, 9 am. *Thursday* meditation begins Sept. 7; *Sunday* meditation begins Sept. 10.

Dharma School (Buddhist education for children) — Begins Sept. 10.

Introduction to Buddhism—4 week course held periodically throughout the year. New session starts in late September.

Buddhism Study Class—Wednesdays, 7-8:30 pm. Class begins Sept. 20.

Sutra Study Class—2nd or 3rd Sunday of the month, 12:30 pm to 2 pm. No previous Buddhism study required. This month: Sept. 17 (tentative).

Cultural Activities

Chinese Movement (Qigong)—Tuesdays, 11 am to 12:15 pm. Call Dennis Chan 312-771-6087 for info.

Japanese Swordsmanship (Iaido)—Mondays, 7-9 pm. Call 773-334-4661 for info.

Taiko (BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe)—*Adults*, Fridays, 7-9 pm. Email kokyotaiko@yahoo.com for info. *Children*, 1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays at 11 am. Email sanghacomod@yahoo.com.

Ukulele Group—Tuesdays, 1 pm. Call Ruth 773-784-0239 for info.

Kumihimo (Japanese braiding)— Saturdays, 9 am-noon. This month, Sept. 16, and Sept 30. Experienced braiders and beginners are welcome. Contact Nancey Epperson, naepperson14@gmail.com.

Movie Night—One Tuesday night a month, 6:30 pm. HOWEVER, THIS MONTH, WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 27, 6:30 pm, *The Devil Wears Prada* (see this month's preview).

Book Club—One night a month. This month: to be determined.

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1944 as an administratively independent temple, The Buddhist Temple of Chicago aspires to the following:

- To present and explore the Three Treasures of Buddhism – the Buddha (teacher), the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community).
- To be guided and inspired by the historical Buddha, Gautama Shakyamuni, and the teachers who have followed – Shinran Shonin, Manshi Kiyozawa, and Haya Akegarasu.
- To present the Buddha-Dharma in a language and manner relevant and understandable in contemporary America.
- To welcome all who seek the Dharma without any exceptions.
- To be a positive presence in our local community working to enhance the vitality of our neighborhood.
- To honor and continue the traditions of our founding members.
- To always live the Nembutsu – Namu Amida Butsu.

BTC BULLETIN

Team Rev. Patti Nakai, Nancey Epperson, Darryl Shishido, Ann Yi

Feedback & Submissions Comments, corrections, questions, and suggestions welcome. Submissions of articles, essays, book reviews, photos, poetry, news items, announcements, drawings, etc., strongly encouraged. Submissions will be reviewed for suitability and space availability. Anonymous submissions will not be published, but author's names may be withheld from publication upon request.

Contact E-mail BTCbuledtr@hotmail.com or speak with anyone on the BTC Team

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- ☸ 7/02 Regular Sunday service.
- ☸ 7/08 Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for the late William Nagata at BTC. He is survived by his mother Anna, siblings Joyce, Jane and Steve.
- ☸ 7/09 July memorial service conducted by the lay leaders. *** Chanting class met.
- ☸ 7/15 Asoka Society met.
- ☸ 7/16 Regular Sunday service. *** Sutra study class met.
- ☸ 7/18 Bon Odori teachers met to practice for the 2017 program.
- ☸ 7/19 Movie Night. *** Rev. Nakai attended Chicago Japanese American Council meeting in Northbrook.
- ☸ 7/21 August bulletin mailed.
- ☸ 7/22 Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for the late Toshiko Wada at BTC. She is survived by daughter Teruko. *** Rev. Nakai conducted memorial service for the late Dave Mineo Fujii at BTC. He is survived by sisters Janet, Kathy and Nancy.
- ☸ 7/23 Regular Sunday service. *** Board of Directors met.
- ☸ 7/25 Bon Odori practices started and continued 7/27, 8/1 and 8/3.
- ☸ 7/26 BTC visited by youth group from Eden United Church of Christ. *** BTC hosted public discussion of community oversight of police sponsored by ONE-Northside and other local organizations.
- ☸ 7/28-30 Nancey Epperson, David Leshuk and April Sakaeda attended the Maida Center annual retreat in Berkeley, CA.
- ☸ 7/30 Abbreviated Sunday service followed by the annual temple picnic.

Our deepest sympathy to
the family and friends of:

Toshiko Wada

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU,
THANK YOU!**

**Understanding the Nembutsu through recognizing
the Paramitas in others.**

Send in your recognitions!

- Sunday Service Participants: Bill Bohlman, Miriam Solon, Wendy Fawcett, Elaine Siegel, Mary Ozaki, Diana Schoendorff, Tom Corbett, Alec Hudson, Z'Jay Williams, Nancey Epperson, Ed Horiuchi, Sue Balsam
- Music/Accompanists: Drea Gallaga, Bea
- Audio Controls: Wendy and Jacob Fawcett, Gary T. Nakai
- Sunday Service Refreshments: Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Ruby Tsuji, Nancey Epperson, Elaine Siegel, Karen Kanemoto, Amy Kawamoto, Jim Kikuchi, Jackie Denofrio, Upaya Group
- Bulletin Mailing: Sue Balsam, Abby Wold, Antoinette d'Vencets, Ruby Tsuji, Candy Minx, Masa Nakata, Dennis Chan, Sadie Kasamoto, Ed Horiuchi,
- Cleaning Temple washrooms: Anonymous
- Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tadamoto
- Maintaining and updating the Temple computer: John Kelly, Gary T. Nakai
- Maintaining and updating the Temple website: Ann Yi, Wendy Fawcett
- Emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal: Sue Balsam, Adam Kellman, Nancey Epperson, Ruby Tsuji
- Cleaning Hondo and Nokotsudo: Michael Yasukawa
- Administrative Office Volunteers: Ruth Abbinanti, Darryl Shishido, Nancey Epperson, Susan Balsam, Helene Rom, Carrie Breitbach, Mary Samson

Our apologies to anyone we have failed to include on this list.

ALPHAWOOD GALLERY

2401 North Halsted Street, Chicago

“THEN THEY CAME FOR ME”

On Sunday, October 22, 2017, in the afternoon, the Asoka Society plans to see this important exhibit on Japanese American history.

R.S.V.P. to alicemurata@hotmail.com

For more info on this exhibit, alphawoodgallery.org

The Devil Wears Prada

by Candy Minx

Movie Night, *The Devil Wears Prada*, September 27, 6:30 pm

An unlikely setting for the observation of Dharma lessons and a unique example of enlightenment is found in the high fashion world of *The Devil Wears Prada* starring Anne Hathaway and Meryl Streep. Hathaway plays a fresh graduate moved from Chicago to New York who cannot seem to find employment in her chosen field of journalism so she seeks work at a fashion magazine. Meryl Streep plays the elite editor of a trendy fashion magazine who reluctantly hires Hathaway's character. Hathaway plays Andrea, a slumpy, average-dressed young woman who believes she is overeducated for the job and more intellectual than her co-workers and that the focus on style and appearances is beneath her. However, her work ethic and competitive nature are recognized by her bosses and co-workers and her competitive nature inspires her to excel in the work environment. In fact Hathaway becomes very dedicated and her role becomes an apt metaphor for a spiritual aspirant as she constantly challenges her pre-conceived notions and works very hard to become knowledgeable about the fashion industry and the historic elements of art within clothing design. Hathaway sacrifices her regular lifestyle and surrenders to learning what more experienced bodhisattvas can teach her. Meryl Streep becomes her sensei.

Meryl Streep's performance as a world famous editor is one of her most mainstream and accessible characters. One cannot take their eyes off of her. Streep is fully enlightened in the sense she understands how everything is connected. She shares her enlightenment and comprehension that "everything is connected" with her staff. Her aesthetic rendering of each page of the magazine is done with "perfection." Streep's character lives completely in the moment and is an intense teacher. All her discussions, physical rituals and artistic philosophy are focused and practiced with every breath. Streep's character gives her audience something very important to think about. Is there value in enlightenment and commitment to perfection if we ourselves are not connected to other people? Is devoted practice of one's ethics worthwhile if it has motivations that feed the ego? Streep may be

(continued on next column)

敬老

Keiro Kai:

Honoring Our Elders

On October 8, 2017, in conjunction with our Temple's 73rd Anniversary observance, we are honoring members and friends 80 years and older. There will be a special bento box luncheon, and a small keepsake gift for the participants. If you are over 80 years old, and interested in attending, please RSVP by September 23 to Lynn Maruyama: lmuruyama14@gmail.com, or by leaving a message at the Temple: (773-334-4661)

Kumihimo – Let's Get Our Braid On!

Braids are beautiful – and useful! If you've ever wondered "Where are my glasses?", then you may want to make our September project – a kumihimo eyeglass cord. The BTC Kumistas (kumihimo artists) will meet 6 times on Saturday mornings from September through December. Throughout the fall, we'll make projects with thick cord, with thin cord, and with beads. Everyone is welcome, from experienced braiders, to new braiders to curious crafters of other art forms. Project kits and Kumihimo toolkits may be purchased at class time. We're a friendly supportive bunch & we hope to meet you this fall!

Contact Nancey Epperson (naepperson14@gmail.com) for more info or to sign up.



The Devil Wears Prada

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the perfect practitioner of fashion dharma but her goal is social climbing and she does not take care of her home life or build relationships. Hers is a community of one.

NATSU MATSURI HAIKU WINNERS!

Haiku poetry, like many art forms in the Buddhist tradition, opens a path to encounters with the world beyond the confines of our ego. The haiku, in the words of Professor Yasuda, renders “a speaking, vibrant image.”¹ “The haiku has something in common with painting, in the representation of the object alone, without comment, never presented to be other than what it is, but not represented completely as it is.” The haiku poet “does not give us meaning; he gives us the concrete objects which have meaning, because he has so experienced them (1).”

Our annual Natsu Matsuri Haiku Contest gives us a chance to explore this non-dualistic way of expression. This year’s theme was “mist, fog,” a thingless phenomenon that tends to obscure the concrete nature of our experience. It made for some intriguing writing. The contest winners:

1st PLACE

What is this damp ghost
That wraps the leaves in sorrow
Perhaps it will dry
Michael Nudo

Without the intrusion of a grieving person into the nature imagery of dewy foliage, Michael’s haiku evokes grief, and offers hope. The famous haiku by Issa (1763-1828), memorializing the death of his young child, comes to mind:

This world of dew
Is a world of dew.
And yet ... and yet ...

2nd PLACE

Fog mist
Creeping through trees
Kitten wandering
Antoinette d’Vencets

Harking back to Carl Sandburg’s famous poem of the fog’s “little cat feet,” Antoinette’s poem also recalls another haiku by Issa:

Dim the grey cow comes
mooing mooing
and mooing
Out of the morning mist

3rd PLACE—TIE

With Natsu Matsuri falling on Fathers’ Day, many of our contestants had their loved ones in mind. We had a tie, with two haiku using mist as a figure of recollection:

Memory is mist
All is covered
But the shapes remain
Mary Henry

Mist of memory
Your joy parts lingering fog
On this Father’s Day
Gil Cabrero

CRITICS’ CHOICE

Sado ga-shima
Wrapped in yukata of fog
Vanishes like dreams
Miriam Solon

Miriam’s haiku dresses Sado ga-shima, a remote and beautiful island, in a summer kimono-like garment, the yukata.

HONORABLE MENTION

In this haiku, Addyson inverts the imagery, and writes of taking refuge in – not from -- the rain.

Hides me from the bad
Under a layer of white
Rain in a mist form
Addyson McGarry

Footnote

(1) Kenneth Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English* (Rutland, VT and Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1957), xix.



At Long Last—Love!



On August 4, Stella McKearn and Sergio Gomes were married at BTC (photo: Rev. Patti Nakai)



A volunteer gardener demonstrates “Virya” (or is it “Dana?”) (photo: C. Minx)

O-Higan and the Six Paramitas

On Sunday September 17, we will observe the Fall Equinox, or O-Higan. The Japanese word Higan means “crossing to the other shore”, and is also the word used for the Sanskrit term *paramita*. In this samsaric life, we are on the shore of suffering, anger, weakness, and depression. By focusing on the practice of the six paramitas, we can cross over to the other shore of awakening.



In the Jodo Shinshu tradition, the premise is that we are unable to work towards our own perfection (awakening) due to our innate self-centeredness. Although we are encouraged to practice to the best of our abilities, the teachings are reminders of the egocentric nature of our lives.

The Six Paramitas are:

Dana – giving, offering, generosity. The practice of an open heart, of giving freely what is needed by others.

Sila – discipline, observing the precepts. Developing good behavior, obeying the rules of parents, teachers, and society.

Ksanti – patience, inclusiveness. One who is patient can endure long and be able to overcome many difficulties. With patience, we can develop an open heart, and frustration and anger will diminish.

Virya – endeavor, diligence, perseverance. To strive with one’s whole heart continuously over long periods. The resulting spiritual strength enables the individual to continue on without giving up in the face of difficulties.

Dhyana – meditation, contemplation. Meditation allows the person to concentrate upon the mind, to learn to understand it. This develops the practice of the other paramitas, penetrates the mind’s delusions, and gains insight into ultimate reality.

Prajña – wisdom, insight, understanding. Seeing things as they are, without the prejudices and perspectives that come from within. It is the letting go of opinions and concepts, the relinquishment of the self, bringing the wisdom that leads directly to awakening. (Source: higashihonganji website)

Life is Hard, Living is Ease

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listen to Shinran's teachings, he went forward into a whirlwind of dynamic activity, sharing the Dharma through teaching classes, giving public lectures, producing a journal and mentoring a group of young ministers (which included Akegarasu). But even as Kiyozawa's last years were full of tragedies – a student strike forced him to resign as university president, he lost his wife and two sons to illness and his own health was deteriorating rapidly, what he expressed to the world was, "Thanks to the liberation through the Power Beyond Self, I can enjoy my life in a bright ocean filled with serene winds."

When people say Buddhism is depressing and pessimistic because of the First Noble Truth, "life is suffering," it shows they haven't yet delved into the teachings which show us the path where suffering is transformed into joy. To be more precise, the Buddha pointed out that our individual ego-centered life is *dukha*, the discord between what we want and actual reality, and that discord is felt as suffering, annoyance, misery, anxiety etc. But when we are awakened to Unbounded Life (i.e. Amida) – the flowing force that includes our life with all other lives, past, present and future – then we cherish each moment of being alive as *sukha*, the vibrant sense of being in harmony, in oneness and at ease in a dynamic sense, being carried by "serene winds." So I see in the lives of nembutsu followers that "life is hard (*dukha*) but living is ease (*sukha*)."

The key to understanding this joy in the midst of terrible personal circumstances can be found in what is called *hongan*. In *Shout of Buddha*, Rev. Saito used the standard translation "original vow" for *hongan*, but later preferred to translate it as "innermost aspiration." In too many Shin Buddhist translations, "original vow" sounds like the pledge of a particular person of ancient times, so I understand why Rev. Saito wanted to convey the universality of *hongan* by using the phrase "innermost aspiration." In *Shout of Buddha* along with Rev. Gyomay Kubose's writings around the same time (1960s-70s) it seems like *hongan* is portrayed as "my own wish." But I've come to appreciate that *hongan* refers to a force beyond the ego-self that acts upon and through "my" self and so in the above quote, I amended the translation to read, "the way of the Wish." What is "the Wish"? It is the deep, deep, innermost desire in each being to awaken to the reality of being connected to all of life. Our own particular wishes will usually be thwarted or only momentarily fulfilled, but to be alive is to experience the deepest wish of all beings being nurtured and brought to everyone's consciousness.

So as Akegarasu says in the above quote – we have to deal with our particular struggles and sorrows in the changing circumstances of our individual lives. Yet in the

(continued on next column)

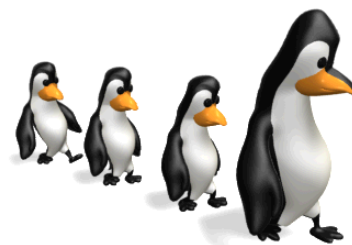
Lay Leaders

(continued from page 1)

chanting. For other parts of the service, a lay leader fills the role of the minister. At times there is a bit of confusion, but this is a necessary part of the learning process. Now, more than ever, this learning process is imperative.

When Rev Patti accepted the position of resident minister, it was with the understanding that she would miss some Sundays due to speaking engagements or seminars. Even though he had retired, we knew we could count on Rev. Ashikaga to fill in on these occasions. Now, that option does not exist. One of the attributes of a temple is its dependability; on Sunday there will be a service. Also, there is a need for someone to conduct the various memorial services. Ideally this is Rev. Patti, but the possibility exists that she might not be available due to health or other considerations. It is for this reason that the lay leader program is so important. Certain functions require an ordained minister, but some services can be performed by someone who is trained in the various aspects.

The lay leader program is also the training ground for potential candidates to receive tokudo, the first level of ordination. With this ordination they are able to perform some of the basic duties of a minister. As we have learned from past experience, it is extremely difficult to find a minister from outside BTC; perhaps the answer will be to "grow our own". In any event, the lay leader program is essential for the future of BTC. Please help us identify those within our membership who demonstrate serious commitment to learning and sharing the Dharma and who could be effective as a lay leader.



Life is Hard, Living is Ease

(continued from previous column)

deepest view, the widest view, it is all part of the "bright ocean filled with serene winds." Even in the circumstances the secular world calls "unbearable," the person of Namu Amida Butsu joyfully walks the way of the Wish.



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

1151 W Leland Ave
 CHICAGO, IL 60640-5043 USA
www.buddhisttemplechicago.org
 Phone: (773) 334-4661

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BTC CALENDAR						
SEPTEMBER 2017		See Temple Events & Activities Guide on page 2 for details on events. Events may be canceled or moved after press time due to unforeseen circumstances. Check www.facebook.com/budtempchi for the most up-to-date changes.				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 EBL Conference	2 EBL Conference
3 EBL Conference – NO SERVICE at BTC	4 7 pm laido	5 11 am Qi Gong	6	7 Bulletin Submissions Due	8 7 pm Taiko	9
10 11 am Monthly Memorial Dharma School Begins	11 7 pm laido	12 11 am Qi Gong	13 7 pm Study Class	14 7:30 pm Meditation	15 7 pm Taiko	16 9-12 pm Kumihimo 1:00 pm Asoka Society
17 9 am Meditation 11 am Fall O-Higan Service	18 7 pm laido	19 11 am Qi Gong	20 7 pm Study Class	21 7:30 pm Meditation	22 10 am Bulletin Mailing 7 pm Taiko	23
24 9 am Meditation 11 am Regular Service Dharma School 12:30 pm Board Meeting	25 7 pm laido	26 11 am Qi Gong	27 Movie Night	28 7:30 pm Meditation	29	30 9-12 pm Kumihimo
